

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on July 13, 2004.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants respectfully note that claim 24 is allowed.

The Office Action states that claims 3, 15 and 19-22 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 3, 15 and 19 are accordingly rewritten in independent form. Claims 20-22 depend from claim 19 and are allowable therewith.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of original claim 3, which were indicated as reciting allowable subject matter, while removing the limitation that the connectors are symmetric about the axis. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as currently amended, is allowable in view of the prior art of record. Therefore, notice of the allowance of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 4-11 and 14 is respectfully requested. Applicants further request reinstatement of claims 12 and 13 for further consideration. 37 C.F.R. 1.141(a) allows for "more than one species of an invention, not to exceed a reasonable number, [to] be specifically claimed in different claims in one national application, provided the application also includes an allowable claim generic to all the claimed species and all the claims to species in excess of one are written in dependent form (§ 1.75) or otherwise include all the limitations of the generic claim." Each claim 12-13 depends from generic independent claim 1, which Applicants believe is allowable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request notice of the allowability of claims 12 and 13 along with claims 1-2, 4-11 and 14.

Independent claim 18 is hereby amended to include the limitations of claim 19 which were indicated as being allowable, but eliminating the limitation that the connectors are symmetric about the axis. Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 18, as currently

amended, is allowable in view of the prior art of record. Therefore, Applicants request notice of the allowability of claim 18 and its dependent claim 23.

RESTRICTION ELECTION

Claims 16 and 17 are hereby canceled as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

CONCLUSION

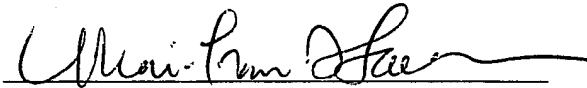
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims 1-15 and 18-24 are allowable in view of the prior art of record. Notice of the allowability of these claims is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of any additional fees associated with this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0982.

Respectfully submitted,

KINNEY & LANGE, P.A.

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